

## Introduction to Patronage and Suspension of Presentation

### 1. What is the role of a Patron?

In the Church of England, priests are appointed to a benefice (a legal group of parishes). Historically, each parish had a patron who held the patronage. They held the right to present a priest to the Bishop, and they paid for the priest. The church has changed, but the right of the patron or patrons to present a priest to a vacant benefice continues.

Today, each benefice has one or more patrons. Patrons can be individuals, bodies or societies, universities, the Bishop, and sometimes the Crown. There are variations of patronage arrangements including:

- sole patronage – where the benefice only has one patron and therefore they exercise their patronage right each time there is a vacancy;
- joint patronage – where there is more than one patron and they exercise their patronage together each time there is a vacancy; or
- patronage by turns – where patrons take turns to exercise their patronage rights – either individually or in small groups. They act as patron less often but will have a greater input into the choice of the next incumbent.

When a Rector or Vicar leaves, the patron is involved with the process of appointing a new priest, along with the Bishop, Archdeacon and PCC(s). They then 'present' a candidate to the Bishop who appoints that person as incumbent. The Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 is the legal mechanism for the process of appointing an incumbent and this details the role of the patron and the process of reappointment.

Patrons therefore play an important role in the appointment of an incumbent, but are also consulted during the process of pastoral reorganisation. A pastoral scheme which amends the patronage arrangements for a benefice must make provision for the rights of each patron.

### 2. Suspension of Presentation

When a benefice falls vacant, the process under the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 begins. This supposes that a reappointment will be made within a certain timeframe. Occasionally, the Bishop may feel that additional time is needed to consider the right pastoral arrangements for the benefice. The Bishop may therefore decide to temporarily suspend the patron's right to present a candidate. This pauses the process under the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 for a period of up to five years.

To implement a suspension, the Bishop must gain the consent of the Archidiaconal Mission and Pastoral Committee (ADMPC). The Bishop must also consult the interested parties. These include:

- Archdeacon
- Rural Dean
- Lay Chair
- the PCCs and
- the patrons

Following the consultation the Bishop will sign the Notice of Suspension which will be emailed to the interested parties and must be displayed for 28 days.

## **2.1 What does a Suspension of Presentation mean in practice?**

A Suspension of Presentation does not mean that no appointment can be made. In most cases, the Bishop, after consultation with the patrons and PCCs, will instead appoint a Priest in Charge to have oversight of the benefice. All new appointments are made on Common Tenure whether the role is a Priest in Charge or an incumbent. There is, therefore, very little practical difference between the role of a Rector/Vicar and the role of a Priest in Charge and by and large, a parish will notice no difference.

Pastoral reorganisation may be considered during this time. It is important to note that this is a separate legal process and therefore any proposals will require their own consultation of the interested parties. Please see 'An Introduction to Pastoral Reorganisation' for more information. This can be accessed on the [Pastoral Reorganisation](#) page of the website.

## **3. Do you have further questions?**

The Governance Team at Emmaus House is here to help. Please contact us via phone on 01722 411922 or email [parishsupport@salisbury.anglican.org](mailto:parishsupport@salisbury.anglican.org).